

The President's Daily Brief

28 July 1972

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

LATE ITEM

Egypt-USSR:

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The withdrawal of these aircraft appears to end the Soviet capability for naval air reconnaissance from Egypt.

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PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

In Vietnam, both sides are repositioning their forces in the Quang Tri City area in preparation for further heavy fighting. Recent photography shows another petroleum pipeline under construction in North Vietnam parallel to the nearly completed dual pipeline system. (Page 1)

Indian Prime Minister Gandhi has made clear her intense distrust of the US in a farewell interview with Ambassador Keating. (Page 3)

The USSR apparently has nearly completed work on a new tactical surface-to-air missile system. (Page 4)

Another major Soviet manned space mission appears imminent. (Page 5)

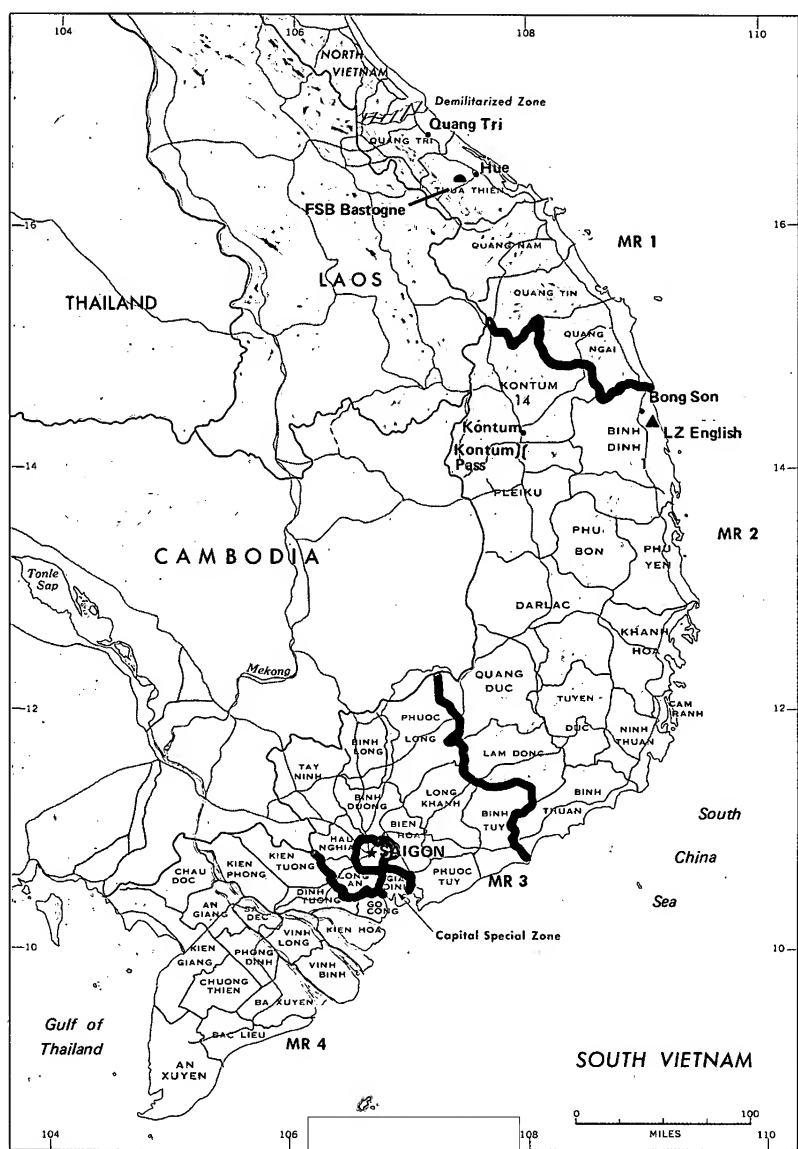
[redacted] USSR
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At Annex [redacted] Soviet
[redacted] Egypt.

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VIETNAM

South Vietnamese Airborne troops were withdrawn yesterday from inside the Quang Tri citadel after suffering heavy casualties. Government marine units will now assume the responsibility for clearing the Communists from Quang Tri City and from within the citadel. During the rotation, sporadic enemy shellings hit South Vietnamese troops in the area. Several sharp ground clashes were reported on the city's northern and southern edges.

Enemy intercepts disclose that the Communists are preparing to strengthen their forces in the Quang Tri City area. Elements of the recently arrived North Vietnamese 325th Division have been ordered to attack government forces along the city's western flank in order to relieve pressure on Communist forces inside the capital.

This is the first indication that units from the 325th Division will be committed to the Quang Tri City battlefront. It will raise to seven the number of enemy infantry regiments now involved in the defense of Quang Tri City.

Following their pullback from Fire Support Base Bastogne on Wednesday, South Vietnamese units are regrouping near the base and have moved reinforcements into the area. The enemy's occupation of Bastogne, however, puts them within easy artillery range of Hue.

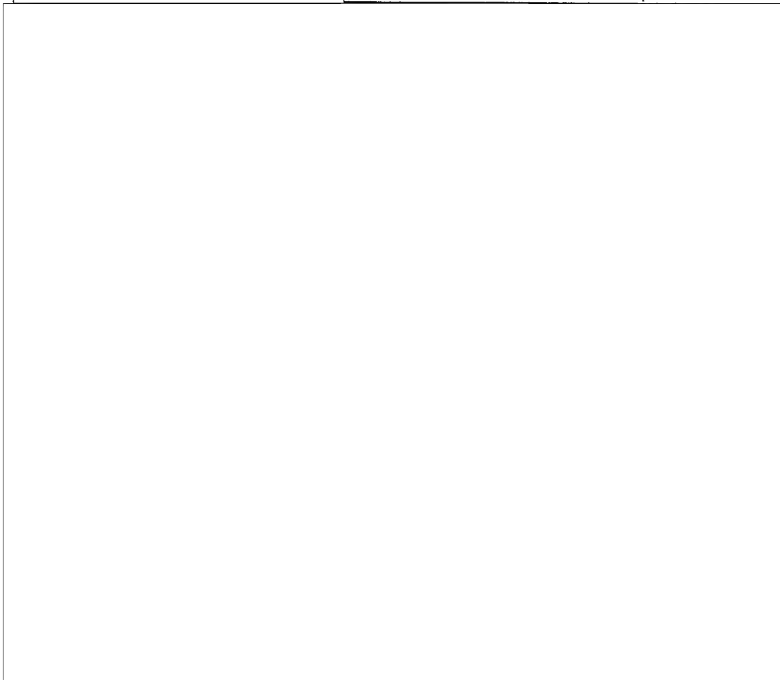
The government's drive to recapture northern Binh Dinh Province met increased enemy resistance yesterday. Several sharp ground clashes were fought along Route 1 north of Landing Zone English, while Communist gunners hit the nearby town of Bong Son with over 200 rocket and mortar rounds. Farther inland, Kontum City received its first significant shelling in more than a month. A North Vietnamese infantry regiment has moved back into the Kontum Pass area south of the city and has begun again to harass South Vietnamese military convoys traveling on Route 14.

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Photography taken in mid-July of the dual petroleum pipeline under construction between the Chinese town of Ping-hsiang and Hai Duong in North Vietnam does not confirm that the system is operational, but suggests that it is nearly completed. Photography

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[] has shown another petroleum pipeline under construction parallel to the dual pipeline system. Intermittent construction of the new pipeline currently extends from the Dong Dang area to a few miles north of Hai Duong and has taken place in the last two weeks. Although the new construction route is only a few yards from the earlier pipeline at some points, there is no evidence that the two are actually connected. The new line will provide added import and distributive capacity in meeting North Vietnam's petroleum requirements.

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INDIA

Prime Minister Gandhi made clear her intense distrust of the US in a farewell interview with Ambassador Keating on 24 July.

Mrs. Gandhi accused the US of trying to drive a wedge between India and Bangladesh, of colluding with radical Indian Communists against her government, of sponsoring visiting professors who have engaged in "improper activities," and of working against Indian interests in the "monetary field." Mrs. Gandhi declined a request to document her charges, but insisted she had "reasons" for her "feelings." She maintained that India will progress with or without US help and that "it doesn't matter in the least to us what the US does about debt relief or aid." She implied that India will continue to discriminate against US economic interests.

Ambassador Keating's farewell talks with other members of the government--including President Giri, Foreign Minister Singh, and Foreign Secretary Kaul--were much friendlier and more moderate in substance. Nevertheless, they tended to confirm that Mrs. Gandhi's government will, for the present, do nothing to improve bilateral relations or to arrest the trend toward tightened restrictions on all US activities in India.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

USSR

The latest satellite photography of the Emba test range northeast of the Caspian, where tactical surface-to-air missile systems are developed, shows four vehicles of the new SA-X-8 system that the Soviets have been working on for some five years. Each vehicle has four launch rails or tubes and a target acquisition radar.

The SA-X-8 system is designed to provide ground force units with close-in defense against low-flying tactical aircraft--possibly as low as 50 to 150 feet. The system, which resembles the US Army's Chaparral, would complement the coverage provided by Soviet man-portable SAMs and antiaircraft gun systems.

The presence of four SA-X-8 vehicles indicates a late stage of testing. If the remainder of the test program proceeds smoothly, the system could enter operational service by the end of the year.

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USSR

Another major Soyuz space mission appears imminent. Soviet space support ships in the Atlantic and Pacific oceans are taking up stations normally associated with the monitoring of manned space flights.

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NOTES

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Cuba: During his annual 26 July state-of-the-nation address, Castro made it plain that at this juncture Cuba has no real alternative to close economic and military collaboration with the Soviets. He then said, however, that this was temporary and that economic and political integration with Latin America could solve many of Cuba's problems--although not until after the socialist revolution in the area. Under today's circumstances, he saw no hope of resuming ties with the US.

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THE SOVIET MILITARY WITHDRAWAL FROM EGYPT

President Sadat announced on 18 July that, as of the previous day, he had decided to "terminate the mission of the Soviet military experts and advisers, who came at our request" and would replace them with Egyptians "in all the tasks they used to carry out." He said that "all the military equipment and installations set up within Egyptian territory" since June 1967 would be "the sole property of Egypt and under the administration of its armed forces."

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